

The Soldier's Prayer – Part 12
What to Pray for Pastors

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AM Service

By: Pastor Greg Hocson

Text:

Ephesians 6:18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; 19: And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20: For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

Introduction

In August 15th, year 1778, Charlemagne's army was moving through the mountains, when the rearguard portion of the army was ambushed by the enemy. The rearguard was greatly outnumbered by the ambushing enemy. Roland who was the commander of that rearguard refused to blow the horn to call Charlemagne's army back to help him. And he refused to blow it because of pride. He underestimated the strength of his attackers and as a result the entire rearguard was massacred.

Roland refused to call for help because he is so prideful. He did not think he needed help. I am afraid the story of Roland is the story of many Christians in our world. We underestimate the enemy and our battle. We have this idea that we can handle just anything on our own. We don't need any help. We don't have to blow the horn. And as a result many Christians find themselves overwhelmed and defeated by the enemy because of pride and self-sufficiency thinking they can fight the war alone.

That is not the way the war is won. Paul knows that **he does not have enough strength to win the war singlehandedly.**

Ephesians 6:19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,

Here we read the Apostle Paul asking his congregation that they would pray for him. This request is not under a guise of humility. Paul was sincere in this request. This request is born out of the real sense of his weakness, the greatness of his responsibility and the difficulty of the task at hand and the opposition of a strong enemy. Paul realizes that he needs God's gifts and grace, to enable him to faithfully and successfully carry out the work and service of Christ.

It is true that God is the One who ultimately sustains pastors, but **one of the primary means that God sustains the pastors is through the prayers of the people.**

Last Sunday, we learned that there are two basic areas where we must pray for spiritual leaders, namely their **life** and their **ministry**. We already talked about Paul's prayer request in regard to his life. This morning let's talk about his prayer request in regard to his ministry.

What exactly Paul had in mind when he said to the Ephesians, "*and pray for me*"? What did he want them to pray for him about? He tells us in various places in the New Testament in his writings.

Ephesians 6:19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20: For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

I - Opportunity

We need to remember that Paul was in prison at Rome when he wrote this letter to the Christians in Ephesus. His hands were in chains. He has been arrested for his faith. He was being persecuted in the name of Jesus and he was going to face death. As his hands and feet were in chains, he wrote to the Christians in Ephesus, "*pray for me and here is what I want you to pray.*"

Ephesians 6:19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,

Notice that it is not release from imprisonment he was asking. What he asks them to pray for him was that God would open a door of utterance; **a door of opportunity to preach the Gospel**. Paul did not ask them to pray that he might be released. **Paul's priority** was not his comfort and release but **the spreading of the Gospel**.

Colossians 4:2 Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; 3: Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: 4: That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

Pray that God would grant us an opportunity to minister. That's what we live for. Just as our Lord Jesus Christ came not to be ministered unto but to minister, we ministers of the Gospel are called not to be ministered unto but to minister (Mark 10:45).

This is what I am asking Grace & Truth church family, to pray for me that **God would providentially open a door of opportunity** to speak, to preach, and to teach Word of God. Pray that God would open door of opportunity to hold more Home Bible Studies. A door of opportunity to reach our community with the Gospel.

II - Ability

Ephesians 6:19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, **that I may open my mouth boldly**, to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20: For which I am an ambassador in bonds: **that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.**

Paul pleads with them to pray that when God opens door of opportunity to minister, that He would also give him the ability to minister. Two areas he asks them to pray for him as he ministers.

1. Ability to minister in the area of content

Ephesians 6:19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,

Paul requested prayer for himself “that utterance” might “be given” to him when he opened his mouth to speak. Paul’s hope was that **even as a prisoner he might** “make known the mystery of the gospel”. That words would be given to him so that **he would know what to say**. Pray that he would be able to say the right thing at the right time in the right way.

That is what exactly what I ask you to pray for me – that whenever I am given the opportunity to minister, that God would give me the right words to say.

The messages that I preach to you Sunday after Sunday **does not come to me magically**; they are given to me by God through study, meditation, and prayer. As I pray, study and meditate, God starts putting the understanding of the passage into my mind and it never ceases to amaze me how that God gives the utterance.

2. Ability to minister in the area of his courage

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Paul says pray for the door to open for the Word and that when the door is open he would speak as he ought to speak. **There is only one way to preach the Word of God – boldly**. Boldly does not mean loud or mean, but **without fear** or with **confidence**. He prays that he would be fearless as he preaches. This implies that Paul was not fearless. He is just like us needing prayer to be bold.

Oh, brothers and sisters, pray for me, that when I open my mouth I would speak the right words and that I would make known the Gospel boldly.

III – Victory

Ephesians 6:19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, **to make known the mystery of the gospel**, Again, notice that Paul did not ask them to pray for his comfort or safety, but **for the effectiveness of his witness and ministry**. That he would be able to make known the mystery of the gospel. What he prayed for was that he might be **enabled to properly and successfully preach the gospel**.

2 Thessalonians 3:1 Finally, brethren, pray for us, **that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified**, even as it is with you:

Pray for us that the Word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be glorified.

What a great, great pattern this is. First he said pray for an opportunity to speak. Secondly, when that opportunity presents itself pray that I will speak as I ought to speak - clearly and boldly. And

then pray that the Word may spread from there and be glorified. The Word is glorified when the sinners respond in repentance and faith and when the saints respond in obedience and love. **Paul's main concern is the success and the spread of the Gospel.**

1 Thessalonians 1:5 For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

This is what I am asking you to pray for us who give ourselves to prayer and ministry of the Word. Pray for our preparation and delivery, and for the success of the ministry of the Word. Pray for me on Saturday night, and pray that the Word of the Lord on the Lord's Day would run and be glorified.

Conclusion

That is what Paul wanted. He wanted the ability to minister, the opportunity to minister, and the victory as he ministers. **He asks these things not for his glory but that the word of God would be glorified.** His main concern is that the word of God would be received without any hindrance of dullness of mind or darkness of spirit on that part of those who heard it.

Gardiner Spring said:

"It is at a fearful expense that ministers are ever allowed to enter the pulpit without being preceded, accompanied, and followed by the earnest prayers of the churches. It is no marvel that the pulpit is so powerless, and ministers so often disheartened when there are so few to hold up their hand ... When the churches cease to pray for ministers, ministers will no longer be a blessing to the churches."

If we want the Word of God and the God of the Word be glorified you and I must stand with the spiritual leaders. You must hold us up before the throne of God.

Do you want God and His Word to be glorified in this community where people would be led to repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? Then, brethren, pray for us!

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AMEN!